

to about half the quantity. An equal part of brandy may be added. This is considered to be a month's treatment for one person and is considered to be effective in treating cases of general debility. It is valuable as a remedy for diseases peculiar to women.

My informant (Nicholas Powless) stated that he had bought the remedy, as is customary, from a Delaware herbalist. After a prolonged illness, during which time he was in the hospital, Mr. Powless was brought home, as he said, apparently to die. He obtained the formula just noted, made up the medicine and is taking it daily. He claims that he has continued to regain his strength and is slowly recovering from a complication of diseases pronounced incurable.

A tea made by pouring hot water over a small quantity of soot is given to babies in case of colic. A stronger tea is beneficial for a sick cow.

A powder obtained from decayed pine (*Pinus strobus*) is used for babies because of its healing properties.

#### SUMAC (*Rhus typhina*).

A tea made from the berries is drunk as a remedy for diarrhea. Skunk oil and molasses is taken for colds and cramp. The oil rubbed on the throat and chest sparingly tends to relieve congestion. Goose and raccoon oil are used similarly.

Rattlesnake oil is valuable in treating stiff joints. It is very powerful and should be used sparingly. Only a few drops on the finger tips and applied to the affected parts. The skin may be bound on the wrists and ankles to strengthen them.\*

\* When told of the belief that snake oil, if used alone, "will unjoint you," an idea common among the Wampanoag of Cape Cod, Mass., my informant laughed and said that he knew that it would not because he had used it on his joints with good results. His sister added that if he could obtain some rattlesnake oil, now he might keep in better condition.

436 sweeping, and general order of the premises receive their pay in  
796 wampum beads; the pecuniary value of which amounts to hardly more than a few cents. The drummers, the singers, the dance leaders, the reciters of visions are in their turn rewarded with small donations of wampum at the conclusion of their performances. This is a purifying gift rather than a pecuniary payment, one entirely out of proportion to the worth of service rendered.

[437] The worshipers of the Big House also offer their donations toward the ceremony in strings of wampum, giving them to the Master-of-Ceremonies, saying; *cela'yu'ni ndeli' witcinge'n note'ha'n* "This here is how much I help from my heart!" The sacrosanctity of wampum is furthermore emphasized by the religious rule that wampum should always be given when something has been received, even when only a gift from a friend. In the esteem of the natives it becomes a most potent medicine. Failure to carry out the rules governing the bestowing of wampum would bring sickness upon the receiver of property through exchange or the receiver of a gift. This is especially true in connection with the Delaware practice of medicine, because medicine although destined to heal can double upon itself and become a poison when not sanctified by the conveyance of wampum.<sup>1</sup>

436 In Delaware phraseology "wampum is our heart." In exchanges of  
425 vendable property, even extending to gifts between friends, there  
751 lurked a potency for evil that might develop in who knows what quarter, producing malice or resentment among the parties concerned. It could even result in bodily poison to one or both. It is strictly correct to state that in the attitude of the eastern Indians toward such affairs the transfer of shell money from the hands of the receiver of a gift or a purchase to those of the giver performed the function of medicine.

436 The wampum protected them against spiritual infection and its  
755 manifestation in the body in the form of sickness. Wampum was a purifier, purging the transaction from latent evil force. And should evil have leaked through the transaction the wampum would function as a purgative for its keeper. The same wampum was a spiritual emblem believed by them to have come originally from supernatural sources and embodying within it profound supernatural dynamics.

436 We can understand why a compact sealed with the transfer of  
439 wampum was as sacred as one sworn to under oath by Europeans. It was such an attitude toward exchange and currency that our colonial forebears encountered when they bartered for land and peltry with the aborigines of New England and the Middle Atlantic States. The colonists handed out their exchange with the European notion of in-

<sup>1</sup> I am of course speaking of Delaware therapeutics exclusively, although something along the same line may be said, by those who are inclined toward a critical attitude, of civilized medical practices.

## DELAWARE INDIAN BIG HOUSE CEREMONY

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these spirit-forces are beginning to touch those who carry on this our<sup>539x</sup>  
prayer-ceremony.<sup>796</sup>

Now the Attendants sweep the Big House clean. Now the leading Attendants make fire and burn cedar.<sup>796</sup>

"I am thankful, Oh thou Great Spirit, that we have been spared to live until now to purify with cedar smoke this our House, because that has always been the rule in the ancient world since the beginning of [783] creation. When anyone thinks of his children how fortunate it is to see them enjoying good health. And this is the cause of a feeling of happiness when we consider how greatly we are blessed by the benevolence of our father, the Great Spirit. And we can also feel the great strength of him our grandfather Fire for which we cause him pleasure when we purify and take care with it, and when we feed him this cedar. All of this together we offer in esteem to him, our grandfather, because he has compassion when he sees how pitifully we behave while we are pleading with all the spirit-forces above as they were created and with all those here on earth. Give us everything, our father, that we ask of you Great Spirit even the Creator."<sup>796</sup>

Now the leading Attendant shall carry around a wooden bowl of wampum beads. To every person he shall give equally three wampum [781] beads.<sup>796</sup> But the Following Attendant, a woman Attendant, shall carry a bark bowl containing paint and bloodroot so that everyone shall be [781] anointed with paint.<sup>796</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At the conclusion of these rites on the ninth evening the recitation of visions and the dancing around the White Path is resumed by the reciters as on the preceding nights. When the last reciter has completed his round the ceremony proceeds as announced in the ensuing paragraph with the burning of cedar.

<sup>2</sup> At this juncture the Leader goes to the fire at the east of the center post while the cedar is burning and then to the west fire, and delivers the following prayer in a low tone.

<sup>3</sup> With the ending of his prayer the Leader has timed his movements so that his time was divided before each of the two fires of the Big House while the cedar incense had been burning.

<sup>4</sup> Those receiving the beads can keep them if desired. But it was customary for them to return the wampum to the common fund by putting them in a little bowl standing on one of the hominy mortars outside after the meeting is over for that night. It was only by redonation of this nature that the supply of wampum necessary for conducting the ceremony could be assured.

<sup>5</sup> Some notes on the use of blood-root (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) as a red stain, or an anointment administered to the faces of all the worshippers, have been included in the introduction. A point, however, arises in the matter of ceremonial usage here as recorded in Harrington's study (I, pp. 105-6). He mentions that a bowl of grease is carried around from which the attendants anoint the skin of those to be painted. It might be inferred that some religious significance is attached to the use of grease in this act. And especially so in view of the similar function of grease among the far northern Algonkian who use grease rubbed on the face as "feeding the soul-spirit." Questioning the informant on this interesting point, however, only brings out the simple statement that the grease is put on to protect the skin from the effects of the paint, or pe'-kon, which tends to be irritating. The grease is also put on the carved faces in this case to make the paint, put on after, sink in better. One might imagine, nevertheless, that at some former time the putting on of the grease was more of a rite than it is now.

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worth much more are their services, because exceedingly heavy is this <sup>539x</sup> which we are doing. <sup>796</sup>

Hardly, for example, can I tell how precious it is. But, however, we have heard our deceased ancestors as they were speaking about it say, according to the custom, that the labor of the Attendant, when he makes fire, when he feeds us, when he provides plenty of fire wood, and when he sweeps the House clean;—all of this purification is the cause of bringing joy to the One who created us.<sup>1</sup> For now we have moved along toward where the ceremony closes. Let us consider, my kindred, if it would not bring us good health if again next year right here once more we perform the ceremony.

And besides, my kindred, there remains one more matter, something I want to say for you to bear well in mind. It is said traditionally, when any one on Good meditates in his heart, there is formed the thought. And when he thinks of good it is easy to behave well, but when he misbehaves it is the Evil that a person seriously thinks about as concerns his life. It is exceedingly hard because it is necessary that we prepare the soul-spirit in order that we shall be able to take it back home again to where it belongs, to Our Father, when its use is finished here where we live. Here in this place it is the body that shall remain here because here is where it belongs in the ground.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, my kindred, that is why, as it is said, I plead with you that everyone take part and help me, or call it to my attention if sometimes I forget something. Always have I seen it this way since long ago. Yet at times, as it is said, I feel not to have grasped it sufficiently in mind. That is why, as it is said, I feel well pleased when any one calls my attention to something.

The Attendants must prepare wampum in a wooden bowl and every person shall be given three beads, and every person who wishes to, when he is now leaving to go outdoors, there where sets the hominy mortar may deposit them, whoever has been given these wampum beads. [B-25]

And now, my kindred, here when for the last time we are touched by these our grandfathers the turtle-rattles, that is the beginning of our concluding act. Now here at last we are ready to end this Our Father's service. And, my kindred, now from hence as we are going

<sup>1</sup> The master of ceremonies having now brought the worship to its close now makes his final bow with an eloquent declaration of humility, a summary of the spiritual force of what has been done and an appeal to the loyalty of his tribesmen.

<sup>2</sup> Another designation for the Great Spirit; as the explanation runs, "We are his children." [776]

<sup>3</sup> Mention has already been made, in the introduction, of Delaware eschatology, how it is believed that the heart is the seat of one soul, the blood of another remaining on earth after burial. [775]